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Kenya

Biotechnology

Kenya Biotechnology Report

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Report Highlights:
Though Kenya does not produce any commercial crops that involve transgenic process, it is in the process of developing an official policy to govern trade and production of genetically modified organisms (GMO). It is also one of the most progressive countries in sub-saharan Africa regarding GMO.

Includes PSD Changes: Yes
Includes Trade Matrix: Yes
Annual Report
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1. **Executive Summary**

Kenya has a Draft Biosafety Bill and Draft Biotechnology Policy. Advances in Kenya approval of the Bill and adoption of the policy that will lead to regulation of biotechnology in Kenya are underway but no specific timeframe is provided by GOK.

Kenya requires documentation about GMO status of imports but there are no serious constraints regarding imports of transgenic products both as food aid and commercial.

11. Biotechnology Trade and Promotion

Biotech research activities in Kenya range from use of tissue culture to production of disease-free planting materials, molecular markers for disease diagnosis to biotransformation to producing insect and virus resistant crops. In addition, there are ongoing activities in public outreach and in developing a functional biosafety regulatory system. The later involves biopolicy formulation and development of a national biosafety bill. Kenya has not commercialized any bioengineered crops but produces several tissue culture derived crops including bananas, sugar cane, and vanilla. There is ongoing research in development of GM crops, which are the various stages of Research and Development. These include Bt maize (confined field trials), viral resistant transgenic sweet potato, cassava resistant to the cassava mosaic virus, and Bt cotton (has undergone one season of confined field trial). It is hoped that in the next decade Kenya will commercialize some of these transgenic products.

The U.S. exported transgenic products to Kenya in 2005. These include shipments under the McGovern Dole Food for Education Program, USAID food aid programs (Title 11, Food for Progress). The products are soybean/products and corn/products.

111. Biotechnology Policy

In 1998, the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) developed the Regulations and Guidelines for Biosafety. The NCST through the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) is the coordinating office on all issues related to biosafety. The roles of different regulatory agencies in biosafety are evolving but not yet concretized. For example, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) in the Ministry of Agriculture tends to take the lead in overseeing activities related to introduction, testing and use of GM plants (such as importation of GMO food especially if in form of seed). This role seems to emanate from KEPHIS's Phytosanitary mandate. The Ministry of Health regulates food safety issues. The Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries regulates the veterinary drugs and related issues. The National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA) in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources overseas all issues related to environment such as the environmental impact assessment, while the Pest Control Products Board regulates biopestcides. The preceding roles are more defined in conventional products while for biotechnology products the roles are gradual evolving.

Several workshops to deliberate on issues relating to development of an appropriate biopolicy and biosafety framework have been held. The discussions are wide ranging from importance of GM crops in Kenya, GM food for human health and nutrition, discussion of the draft for biotechnology and biosafety policy for Kenya, and development of biotechnology and biosafety policy in the ASARECA and COMESA countries and biotechnology trade issues. Research institutions, universities and other stake holders have programs that focus on research and technology development, strengthening public institutions to use research and public outreach to promote biotechnology's safe use, and developing local private sectors to

help integrate biotech into local food systems. Kenya has a Draft Biosafety Bill and a Draft Biotechnology Policy.

NCST in collaboration with other stakeholders initiated and enhanced the development of Biotechnology Policy and Biosafety Bill to regulate sustainable research and development of biotechnology in Kenya. The Draft Biosafety Bill and Draft Biotechnology Policy have been presented to the Minister of Science and Technology. Once the policy is adopted it will pave the way for the Bill to be presented to the cabinet by the Attorney General for discussion and approval for publication. The process of adoption of the Biotechnology Policy is expected to occur within a few months to one year. It is uncertain how long the Bill will take before approval. Discussions on the need of having interim measures to facilitate on going trade are underway.

Kenya is a food aid recipient country, the most recent instance being food aid for the drought appeal made by the president of Kenya (2006) and the food for education initiative. There are no serious indications that the GOK may implement policies restricting the use of bioengineered commodities in food aid programs. Kenya is the process of developing its own transgenic products and is increasingly understanding the benefits of agricultural biotechnology such as increased crop yields, reduced need for water and chemical materials and higher resistance to crop stress, pests and diseases (food security concerns).

1V. Marketing Issues

U.S. agricultural and food exports over the last five calendar years average $ 32.2 million with over 80 percent being food aid and monetized shipments under Food for Progress, Title II, P.L. 480 and/or Section 416 (b). The most important being corn and vegetable oils (have transgenic content). Though in small quantities high value products like breakfast cereals, food ingredients and other consumer oriented products are also imported by Kenya. Kenyan importers, retailers and consumers have not expressed serious concerns about importation, sale or use of transgenic products.

V. Capacity Building and Outreach

Under the Cochran Fellowship Program the following participants have been trained between 2003 to date.

Cochran Fellowships from Kenya related to Biotechnology

- May 4-16, 2003: Agricultural Biotechnology Short Course
  13 Cochran Participants
- July 11–16, 2004: Capacity Building Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and technology transfer
  3 Cochran Participants
- June 30 – July 16, 2005: Cochran Training in Policy Development.
  3 Cochran Participants
- Biotech Speaker Programs sponsored by Public Affairs Section
  2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006
- USAID sponsored Programs in Kenya

The country needs include assistance in enhancement of Biosafety Bill for Kenya.

VI. Reference Material

There are no transgenic products approved